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RECENT THEOLOGICAL LITERATURE

BABYLONIAN RELIGION AND LITERATURE

Scholarship has the twofold task of original research and popular presentation. Modern pragmatism has decreed that that knowledge has double value which is worth knowing, not only for itself, but also because of its direct influence upon present life and thought. Not every scholar can popularize successfully. Perhaps the truest test of any popular presentation is that it not only interests a large lay public, but also carries this public so deeply into the subject that the presentation has actual scientific value for fellow-investigators. The happy combination of an authoritative scholar, thus presenting the results of scientific investigation, and particularly of his own investigation, and of a subject with actual, far-reaching interest, naturally promises much.

The American Committee for Lectures on the History of Religions were fortunate in selecting both the subject for the lectures of 1910 and the lecturer. Because of its relation to the religions of the Old and New Testaments the religion of Assyria and Babylonia has commanding interest for modern thought. The recent *Bibel-Babel* controversy did much to popularize the subject in Germany. But in this country it was until now almost a sealed book to the general public. Nor could anyone be found, either here or abroad, better fitted to present this subject properly than Professor Jastrow.¹

The six lectures give a clear and comprehensive presentation of the subject. The amount of material compressed into the limited space is remarkable. The author has carried his readers deep into the subject, and has so well summarized the results of the most recent research that this book forms actually the latest and most complete, even though concise, study of Babylonian religion.

Lecture I, really a general introduction, gives a rapid survey of the history of the early peoples and empires of Mesopotamia, with especial attention to religious influences and development. The discussion of the vexed Sumerian question is particularly illuminative.

Lecture II is a comprehensive treatment of the Pantheon from an objective, historic standpoint. After first discussing the selective

¹ *Aspects of Religious Belief and Practice in Babylonia and Assyria*. By Morris Jastrow, Jr. New York: Putnam, 1911. 471 pages. \$2.25.

processes by which the Babylonian religion eventually fixed upon the sun, moon, vegetation, storms, and water, the forces of nature with which man comes into most constant contact, as objects of deification and worship, the lecture treats in logical succession of the chief gods, Enlil, Ninib, Anu, Marduk, Ea, Nebo, Nergal, Shamash, Sin, Adad and Ashur, and Ishtar as goddess of war, of love, and mother-goddess. The presentation of the process of syncretism in the figure of Enlil is noteworthy.

Lecture III treats of voluntary divination, i.e., divination by means of some object, voluntarily chosen, through which man hopes to secure a sign indicative of future events. In the Babylonian religion this was generally the liver of a sacrificial animal, usually a sheep. The animal became sanctified by sacrifice. Its soul became attuned with the soul of the god to whom it was offered. The liver was the seat of the soul. By studying the liver of the animal it was possible to study its soul and the soul of the god attuned with it, and thus, peering "into the mental workshop of the gods, surprise them at work, planning future events on earth." The lecture is devoted almost entirely to this subject of hepatoscopy, according to the author, the most common form of voluntary divination in Babylon. While not disputing this, nevertheless the feeling is imminent that the importance of other forms of voluntary divination, particularly by means of oil and water, has been unduly minimized. None the less this lecture is certainly the best exposition to date of Babylonian voluntary divination.

Lecture IV discusses involuntary divination, or astrology, "wherein signs, indicating the purpose of the gods, are not sought, but forced upon our notice in spite of ourselves." This subject is of particular interest because of its immediate bearing upon the pan-Babylonist theory of astral religion. Professor Jastrow states emphatically that astral religion can be only a theoretic, artificial system, the product of priestly speculation alone, and never of spontaneous and natural origin and growth, never the religion of people or nation.

Lecture V treats of temples and cults, omen and incantation texts, evil spirits and their removal, lamentation rituals, penitential hymns and prayers to the moon-god, and the cult of Tammuz and Ishtar.

Lecture VI discusses after-life and ethics in Babylonian religion and life. The treatment of this last subject is original and suggestive.

The work is completed by valuable chronological tables, a carefully prepared index, and a large number of well-selected illustrations with lucid explanatory notes.

While naturally the detail of the German edition of the author's *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria* is impossible here, none the less in many respects these lectures represent a distinct advance upon the material and views there set forth. Our knowledge of Babylonian religion grows by leaps and bounds, due to the untiring labors of scholars, in whose very front rank Professor Jastrow occupies a foremost place. Particularly in his treatment of Ishtar and Tammuz is he happy. He no longer insists that Dumu-Zi and Dumu-Zi-Zu-Ab are separate deities. He now properly regards them as one and the same deity, identical with Tammuz whom, however, he still looks upon as a solar deity. He would have been more correct had he realized that Tammuz is rather a god of vegetation, and the son, as the name Dumu-Zi denotes, as well as the consort of Ishtar, the deification of Mother-Earth. He furthermore shows that the conception of the goddess as Mother-Earth was common to all Semites, and therefore presumably of primitive Semitic origin. Here he is certainly correct, as also in his further contention that the dual worship of Tammuz and Ishtar was chiefly of private, extra-temple character. It is one of the merits of this work that it distinguishes between systematic, hieratic temple cult and theology, and private, individualistic folk-religion. Undoubtedly much that has come down to us, particularly in incantation texts, belongs properly in the province of folk-religion and sympathetic magic.

Professor Jastrow deserves our sincere thanks for this distinct contribution to the knowledge of Babylonian religion. By studies like this the true belief and practice of religion is simplified and intensified.

JULIAN MORGENSTERN

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The first lectures delivered on the Wilde Foundation in "Natural and Comparative Religion in the University of Oxford," by Dr. Farnell, are a convincing demonstration of the need and the value of such a lectureship.¹ Dr. Farnell's wide researches in the domain of ancient religions, especially in Greece, have qualified him to speak with authority in this field. It was a happy choice which led him to select the question of influences from the religions of the eastern Mediterranean region (exclusive of Egypt), especially Babylonia, upon the religion of the earlier Greeks—a question to which little sober research has been devoted, although the most sweeping conclusions and assumptions have been

¹ *Greece and Babylon, A Comparative Sketch of Mesopotamian, Anatolian, and Hellenic Religions.* By Lewis R. Farnell. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1911. 311 pages.

made and widely circulated. It is perhaps superfluous to state that Dr. Farnell's method is careful and sound throughout. He carefully defines his categories, as anthropomorphism and theriomorphism, the predominance of the goddess, the deities as nature-powers, as social powers, religion and morality, divine power and cosmogonies, the religious temperament of the eastern and western peoples, eschatologic ideas, ritual, etc. Following these, systematically marshalled, he endeavors to array the essentials so that a clear comparison is possible, and in this effort he has succeeded admirably. The method is so clear and so consistently and impartially carried through, that no one but the adherents of the "Pan-Babylonian" school will question Dr. Farnell's final result, viz., that in the second millennium before Christ there is no demonstrable influence from Babylonia upon Hellenic religion. The cumulative evidence of the successive categories as they are carefully scanned and summarized is altogether conclusive. The author demonstrates his case. This book, together with the recent researches of Kugler in Babylonian astronomy, and those of Cumont in tracing the actual progress of Babylonian religion westward in Graeco-Roman days, will undoubtedly do much toward the extermination of an epidemic of "Babylonitis" which bade fair to become chronic.

In offering the following suggestions all invidious criticism is entirely disclaimed. It is well known that we must base our chronology of early Cretan civilization upon the chronology of Egyptian history and Sir Arthur Evans accepts the Egyptian chronology as reconstructed by Petrie. That the enormously high dates of Petrie in the chronology of Egypt will not stand is perfectly evident, and such dates as the fourth millennium for Cretan remains, accepted by Dr. Farnell, must unquestionably be regarded with reserve. Again it is surprising to find Babylonian inscriptions cited by the author "dated as early as 4000 B.C." (p. 104), when it is highly improbable that we have a single inscription from Babylonia as old as even 3000 B.C. To be sure Dr. Farnell does not write as an orientalist and the discoveries of King which have completely discredited the old high dates in Babylonian history (precisely like those in Egypt) seem to have escaped the author's notice. They became common property, however, in 1907, and have been given wide circulation in King's *History of Sumer and Akkad*, as well as in the second edition of Ed. Meyer's *Geschichte des Altertums*. We even hear of the advanced state of society "in the fifth millennium B.C." in Babylonia (p. 117), and Lugalzaggisi appears "dated near to 4000 B.C." (p. 120), some fifteen to seventeen hundred years too early. The

author's chronological notes from earlier books seem not to have been correlated with the state of our knowledge so much altered since 1907.

The burning of the dead (p. 208), supposably a Babylonian custom after Koldewey's report on his alleged "Feuernekropolen," has been shown to rest upon an error of Koldewey's and is without support. To the observations on the deification of the temple (p. 225) we can now add the further example of the Elephantine temple of the Hebrews in Egypt. In connection with the origin of Greek iconic religion (p. 233), we should doubtless recall the fact that the early Ionian so-called Apollos like that of Tenea in Munich are now generally regarded as strongly under Egyptian influence. Similarly, should we not turn to Egypt and ask if it be an accident that the slayer of Adonis should be a boar (p. 255), and that one version of the Osirian myth discloses Set, the murderer of Osiris, as a swine? In the interpretation of Hesiod the author seems not to have employed the brilliant essay of Eduard Meyer in *Genethliakon* which has thrown a new light on the significance of Hesiod. The discussion of ecstatic prophecy (p. 303) makes no reference to the Syrian youth in the Egyptian story of Wenamon, the earliest known example of prophetic ecstasy and belonging in the latter part of the age discussed by the author.

As to minor matters: there are more misprints than one would wish in so valuable a book. We find "Cybele" and "Kybele" on the same page, while in a number of cases the orthography of proper names is carried over from foreign sources without change, like the German "Sanherib" for Sennacherib and the French "Gargamich" for Carchemish. There is a slip in language on p. 19, "Zarathustra, in whose historic reality we ought not to doubt." These are very small matters, hardly to be mentioned in a work of such solid merit—a work for which the learned author has placed every student of the early world under substantial obligation.

JAMES HENRY BREASTED

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The fourteenth volume of the *Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments* (edited by Bousset and Gunkel assisted by Ranke and Ungnad) furnishes the biblical student the first trustworthy translation and interpretation of the Gilgamesh epic.¹ Almost without exception, the scholars who have worked upon this important

¹ *Das Gilgamesch-Epos*. Neu übersetzt von Arthur Ungnad und gemeinverständlich erklärt von Hugo Gressmann. Göttingen, 1911. iv+232 pp. M. 2.

piece of Babylonian literature have developed astral-mythological and pan-Babylonist symptoms. That is to say, they have followed the students of comparative mythology of the type of Stucken, who explain every myth, legend, or folk-tale which the mind of man has ever invented, as a nature myth portraying in the primitive man's "philosophical" language the wanderings of sun, moon, or star (which of these depends, not upon the tale or legend, but upon the subspecies of comparative-mythologist), and have found in the Gilgamesh story an account of the journey of the sun (Gilgamesh) from the east to the west and then back again through the underworld to the starting-place. Their fertile minds have discovered with ease the astral significance of every one of the many episodes of the epic. Having fixed upon the astral nature of the story of Gilgamesh, the pan-Babylonists proceeded to trace the influence of the same upon the literature of the world. The high-water mark of this method was reached in Jensen's *Das Gilgamesch-Epos in der Weltliteratur*, Vol. I, in which practically every story or episode recorded in the Old and New Testaments is traced back to the Gilgamesh epic as prototype. In a second volume this method is to be applied to the literature of Europe, the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, etc.

Now it is the chief merit of the work of Ungnad and Gressmann that it is free from such vagaries. While full recognition is given to the admirable philological and exegetical work of Jensen, Ungnad finds it necessary to disagree with that scholar at many points. The arrangement of some of the fragmentary sections of the epic differs in this translation from that of Jensen, largely because Ungnad does not seem to be bound down by any theory as to what the epic must be like. For the same reason the translation of Ungnad is less "brilliant" but more accurate than that of Jensen.

In like manner Gressmann's part of the work is to be commended for its sanity. Gressmann recognizes that the Gilgamesh epic, if read without any astral hypothesis in mind, readily resolves itself into a number of episodes which have been more or less loosely woven into one story. So, for example, the account of the deluge probably circulated independently in Babylonia for a long time before it was appended to the story of Gilgamesh. Many of the episodes of the epic undoubtedly go back to historical occurrences of the days before Hammurabi. Babylonian cult and nature myths also found their way into the epic. That similar myths are found outside of Babylonia does not, however, make it necessary to suppose that these were borrowed from that source. These are the points upon which Gressmann rightly lays stress. On the other

hand, Gressmann holds with other scholars that many of the stories of the Old Testament, the account of the creation, the deluge story, etc., undoubtedly are to be traced directly to Babylonia. One may not agree with the date at which Gressmann believes this borrowing took place, but that borrowing did take place few will deny. Another valuable feature of the second part of this work is the keen literary analysis of the epic.

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TWO INTERPRETATIONS OF THE RELIGION OF ISRAEL¹

The indefatigable industry of Professor König has now produced the book for which all his previous publications have been preparing. Having disposed of such subjects as Hebrew grammar, Old Testament introduction, Hebrew and Semitic lexicography, Old Testament poetry, the Old Testament idea of revelation, and the history of the kingdom of God in a series of bulky volumes, he now gathers up the results of all his work in this history of the Old Testament religion. He has felt called upon to do this, especially because "the development of the religion of Israel has, in many particulars, not been presented by the more recent works upon this subject in accordance with historical actuality." This failure to accord with reality, Professor König thinks, is not confined to questions of minor significance, but is apparent also in the consideration of some most fundamental topics. He naturally endeavors to point out the right way as over against the errors of his predecessors. This involves not only a statement of the author's own view, but a statement and criticism of the chief divergent views. In the arrangement of the text, the latter element in the discussion is printed in small type to differentiate it from the author's own positive and constructive statements.

König's method is that of the historical student. His results, however, differ from those presented by the majority of modern students in many particulars. This is largely because he shrinks from the thoroughgoing criticism of the Old Testament sources that is now prevalent. For example, he insists that the Decalogue and the Covenant Code go back to the days of Moses; that E and J belong respectively to

¹ *Geschichte der Alttestamentlichen Religion kritisch dargestellt.* By Ed. König. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1912. viii+608 pages. M. 7.

Biblische Theologie des Alten Testaments. Begonnen von B. Stade. Band II: "Die jüdische Religion von der Zeit Esras bis zum Zeitalter Christi." By A. Bertholet. Tübingen: Mohr, 1911. xvi+546 pages. M. 10.